

THE QUAVER,

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And Exponent of the Letter-note Method.

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Music in the Church.

By W. H. GLADSTONE, ESQ., M.P.

(Continued from page 283.)



F the magnificence of pure vocal music when rendered within the walls of some spacious and resonant edifice by a skilled and powerful choir, we in England have, I fear, but little conception. Such, however, may occasionally be heard in Rome, as I myself can testify. But the country where the ancient usage has been most faithfully preserved is, undoubtedly, Russia. Of this I regret that I cannot speak from experience; but I willingly rely on the report of a friend of mine (not himself a musician) to the effect that the choral music on the occasion of the wedding of their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh exceeded in grandeur anything he had ever heard; and he made special mention of the splendid basses for which that country is, I believe, famous. My own impression is that pure vocal music is capable of rising to more sublime heights in the service of religion than any other form of music whatever.

And here I may notice a practice which has caused in me some indignation. In some of our cathedrals, under the idea apparently of observing Holy Week with special solemnity, silence is imposed not only on the organ but on the choir. Surely, here is a positive insult to music! Such a practice seems to assume that church music must be either festal or sentimental, and therefore inappropriate to so sacred a season. It loses sight altogether of one of the most fitting and efficacious uses of music, namely its adaptation to the most profound sorrow and self-abasement; its ability not only to rejoice with them that do rejoice, but to weep with them that weep. Is not here, at least, an opening for some of the solemn, passionless, nay almost unearthly strains that the genius of Palestrina has bequeathed to the church? Or if we go to another cathedral at the same season, we may hear Haydn's music to the seven last words of the Redeemer. Is this satisfactory? Not at least to my mind. Then is there not here again an opportunity for a return to the ancient usage of the church?

But it will be said, why should we thus go back to the works of a bygone age, when musical science was far less developed than it is now. Have we not abundance of contemporaneous music of a kind far more telling to the popular ear than the comparatively stiff and dry music of the old masters? And with

the amount of musical knowledge and intelligence now spreading all over the country, is it not more to the future than to the past that we must look for improvement?

In replying to this question I must remind you that I do not suggest that we should abandon our modern music. To do so would be unnatural, and could not be right. I recognise to the full that a great composer must, in a great measure, reflect the spirit of his time. Nothing would be worse than that our composers should endeavour to stifle their own natural impulses in deference to a servile imitation or reproduction of former styles. Macaulay says truly "Every man is to a great extent the creature of the age. It is to no purpose that he resists the influence which the vast mass, in which he is but an atom, must exercise on him. He may try to be a man of the 18th century, but he cannot. Whether he will or no, he must be a man of the 19th century." But while this is true of music as well as of the history of nations, &c., I contend that it is the duty of a church musician not wholly to abandon himself to modern ideas without first studying the whole field of music in order to acquaint himself with its history, and to understand and grasp the manner and the meaning of those who have laboured in it before him. Let this study and this experience have its natural effect upon him—no more, no less—his taste will thus be formed and his own talent be free to operate. "Follow nature, study antiquity, make your own art, and do not steal it"—these are the words, the golden words, addressed the other day by Mr. Morris to the Birmingham School of Art, and they embody precisely the meaning I wish to convey. It has been said by a high musical authority that no composer of genius has chosen to adopt the style of the early writers. Possibly the author of the composition you are about to hear may not be allowed to rank as a composer of genius. You will allow, however, I think, after hearing it that he was at least a musician of great talent; and his work derives additional interest from the fact that Mr. Dyce was one of our greatest painters—

(Anthem, "In Thee, O Lord.")

Here then is an instance where the old style so recommended itself to Mr. Dyce that he composed this anthem, not in imitation, I am sure, of the old style, but rather in sympathy with it. I cannot but think that an attach-

ment to the spirit of that style, an endeavour to preserve it in our own day and to hand it on to our successors, is the best guarantee for the future of church music. I think its influence is visible in a good deal of the best music that we have. But I think it is also plain that there is a vast amount of music now written which has nothing in common with it.

I must apologise for the length at which I have dwelt upon this subject, but it is little use saying anything in favour of a revival of old music unless it be earnestly pressed upon the attention of those who are interested in such matters. It is a question which has recently, I believe, attracted considerable attention in Germany, where different publications, among which I may especially mention

Proske's "*Musica Divina*," have rescued, at least in one sense, many of the finest ancient works from oblivion. I trust that sooner or later the question may excite equal interest in England. Even now, eminent musicians of the day are willing enough to admit the abstract merit of the early style, but little or nothing is done to bring it into practical use. Yet it introduced at all, it must be by those in authority rather than by popular demand. Composers should study not merely to please the popular taste, but above all to *guide* it; and I cannot believe that were this the truest and highest kind of church music (as I believe) fully and fairly brought forward, it would fail of acceptance at the hands of the public. [To be continued.]

Musical Notation.

Readers of the *Quaver* are aware that during the early months of its existence this subject was dealt with in these pages. The following article, copied from a recent number of the *Musical Standard*, while agreeing generally with the opinions then advanced, treats the matter from a different point of view, and throws additional light on this important topic.

THE present age is emphatically a time when old principles and theories are subjected to the tests of truth and use. Like the house-keeper's "cleaning day," when the household gods are overhauled and inspected, the useful being furnished up afresh, and the cracked or worn-out, destroyed, the testing spirit of our age is busy with broom and dustpan sweeping away old abuses, brushing up ancient theories, or substituting principles entirely new. Among other matters which crop up for examination, is the use of our musical notation—a subject which just now engrosses much attention, and which evidently must have a very potent influence for good or evil upon the progress of musical art. Accordingly, many are the suggestions for the improvement of our notation—some of them useful and valuable, others just the reverse, and still others wholly impossible, even if desirable. The result is, that amid the cloud of dust thus raised, there is, on the one hand, a danger of leaving improveable matters unimproved; and, on the other, of improving too much. In endeavouring to steer between these extremes, it will greatly assist if we first ascertain what is the end and aim of a musical notation. Ought it to be contrived for the convenience of the executant; or should it carry on its broad back all the information which a student or a beginner needs? This second requirement is evidently an impossibility without so hampering the notation as to lessen or destroy its usefulness to the executant. If, therefore, the notation adopts those plans which are most useful to the

skilled performer, the pupil must master the notation for the sake of its prospective advantages. On the other hand, the professional cannot possibly get on without the amateur; the gold which the latter yields in the shape of fees for tuition is a legitimate consideration, and his notes are legal tender alike in the small choir and the monster orchestra; it is, therefore, desirable to remove from the notation all unnecessary difficulties—i.e. those contrivances which prove stumbling-blocks to the beginner, and do not help the performer when he has mastered them. Combining these two propositions, we obtain the following rule, which will serve the purpose of a test as to whether a given "improvement" is desirable or otherwise:—

The chief value of a notation is its use to the skilled performer; subject thereto, the interests of beginners are worthy of consideration.

As probably most readers will admit this much, we shall, without further argument, proceed to the question of improved notation as viewed in the light of this rule; and it will be found that the alterations really needed are neither so numerous nor so extensive as is often supposed. Many suggested improvements are simply matters between the teacher and his pupil, and which the judicious use of a coloured pencil on the part of the former will amply provide for. For example, objections are sometimes raised against our notation because it draws so much upon the powers of memory of a pupil—he cannot easily remember this, that, or the other fact: therefore

the notation should supply the information. But our test rule says, no; for by trusting certain matters to the memory of the performer (trained, be it observed, to remember them), we are able vastly to reduce the number of symbols to be looked at; and in this way the reading power of a skilled performer is increased. For educational purposes, the remedy is the coloured pencil; or what amounts to much the same thing, music printed expressly for purposes of tuition, and containing the necessary reminder. Leaving, therefore, matters which are purely educational to be dealt with by educational works, we proceed now to examine some defects (real or imaginary) with which our notation is charged.

1. *Multiplicity of Clefs.*—Now that the C clef has altogether disappeared from music printed for popular use, and the pupil in consequence is required to become acquainted with the note-positions of two staves only, this objection is in a great measure obviated. Were it necessary, however, our notation could—without altering a single rule—reduce the labour still further, and arrange so that the notes of both staves shall read alike, thus:—



or



But the advantages to be gained here are so counterbalanced by disadvantages, and moreover the alteration is so difficult to effect, that few will argue for its adoption. The two clefs, as ordinarily used, are no affliction to singers, whether moveable or fixed Do-ists; for the performer simply consults clef and signature at the outset, and has then done with them, unless a change of key occurs: while the instrumentalist will, doubtless, prefer the usual arrangement. At all events, we shall leave the carrying out of this and similar "improvements" to be effected by more enthusiastic reformers—if they can.

2. *Multiplicity of Accidentals.* In this case there does seem room for improvement, and the inconvenience is felt pretty equally by all parties concerned. Every pupil of six months' experience has made discoveries respecting the arbitrary, anomalous, and unsatisfactory

state of matters, so far as they affect him; performers, at a more advanced stage, and who have mastered the anomalies, are yet often accidentally injured, not so much through lack of knowledge as through loss of presence of mind—a faculty quite as necessary; for the feats of the sight-singer are performed as it were in public, and a breakdown is humiliating; while, higher up still, the composer, in order to economise accidentals and increase the legibility of his score, not unfrequently employs "false notation" (writes, for instance, G sharp, where, according to the theorist, he ought to note A flat)—a fact so well known as to render an example unnecessary. This question of accidentals, therefore, affects pupil and teacher, singer and pianist, composer and theorist—all parties, in fact; and any mitigation of the inconvenience is, according to our test-rule, legitimate and desirable.

The undue number of accidentals is the result partly of the habits of the composer, and partly that of the rules which regulate the use of accidentals. As regards the first of these causes, accidentals are multiplied—often to an unreasonable extent—when the composer effects a sustained change of key without at the same time altering the signature; a very usual proceeding, but one which to the singer certainly, and to the player probably, is a source of inconvenience. The obvious remedy is a change of signature when a change of key is sufficiently sustained to render the accidentals cumbersome—a point which the composer himself must decide.

The second cause of the multiplicity of accidentals is not so easily dealt with; but, fortunately, "life is not all ill" in this case either; for there are differences in degree here as elsewhere. The first defect alleged, is the fact, that the same line or space is made to carry several different notes, as, for example, G, G sharp, G flat, G double sharp, and G double flat. But is this principle fundamentally wrong? Must we have a separate position for every distinct note; or, is it not sufficient to secure a separate symbol, or combination of symbols, for each distinct note? Will not the separate position principle involve an increased number of lines and spaces, and thus diminish the legibility of the stave? Further, if we are to have a place for everything, why stop at these five positions? To be truthful and thorough, we ought to find room for all the distinctions of pitch which (although not given on the pianoforte) are used by singers and violinists when they want to make a pure chord or interval. This feat cannot be accomplished by any notation; therefore, the place-for-everything principle must resolve itself into a place for some things,

which is precisely what our notation affords at present; and, in so doing, secures the happy medium between too much information and too little. This view of the case receives further confirmation from the fact that the Tonic Sol-fa notation and the Cheve notation (both of which have had all the world to choose from, and only the interests of the singer to consider,) have adopted a principle precisely the same as the ordinary notation. Thus, for a chromatic sharp, the latter uses a diatonic note, with an accidental before it; the Tonic Sol-fa, a diatonic initial with an E after it; and the Cheve, a diatonic numeral with a diagonal line drawn through it. True, the staff notation puts five sounds in the same line or space, while the other notations have only three, viz., the diatonic sound, and the chromatic sharp and flat of the same name: but, so far as the singer is concerned, the staff notation has practically no more; and if the singer is not inconvenienced by the principle, the player ought to be well able to take care of himself. Now, as according to our test-rule, educational works must provide for educational difficulties, the question resolves itself into the comparative legibility of many lines and spaces, or many accidentals; and, as the multiplicity of the former is a permanent and ever-present evil, while that of the latter is only temporary and occasional, the present arrangement is evidently preferable.

But the other objections raised to our mode of using accidentals appear to have greater weight. The first objection is, that a chromatic sharp may be expressed either by a sharp a natural, or double sharp; and a chromatic flat in like manner, by a flat, a natural, or a double flat, the work done by all three symbols being precisely the same; that the natural is "double-minded and unstable in all its ways;" and that the combination of all these different symbols and different properties of symbols, occurring on the spur of the moment, sometimes upsets even the well-informed. The second objection is, that, on account of the rule which extends the power of an accidental throughout the measure, an additional accidental is often required to contradict the first—thus multiplying accidentals unnecessarily; but that, if the accidental was understood to affect only the note before which it was placed, none but the sounds extraneous to a major key would carry extraneous symbols.

This, then, according to our test-rule, is a case which deserves looking to. If, as everybody admits, the ambiguities resulting are a trouble to the beginner, and a drag upon the rising pupil; if they are so far an inconvenience to the full-blown pianist and organist that the

composer himself finds it expedient to fly in the face of the theorist; if the annoyance is thus felt all round; it is just here the reformer may apply his besom to good advantage. It also happens, that, although there are two evils to be remedied—either one of which might prove incurable if attacked singly—both will be cured with comparative ease, if the work is gone about simultaneously. The thing required here appears to be, the disestablishment of the whole six accidentals, as such, and the substitution of two new symbols—one for elevating, and the other for depressing; these new symbols to act on the principle of the diagonal line used in the thorough-bass figuring, which signifies "a semitone higher than," and is employed indifferently whether the note has to be sharpened, double sharpened, or naturalized. If these two new symbols are understood to affect only the note against which they are placed, a contradictory sign will become unnecessary, and greater legibility will result; for, at present, a natural contradicting a sharp is, through the similarity of the signs, sometimes mistaken for a continuation of the sharp. As the first "composer of eminence" who has public spirit enough to attempt an innovation of this, or of a similar nature, will doubtless immortalize himself, the choice of the two new symbols, and the manner of employing them, are clearly his prerogative; entirely new symbols are, however, indispensable, in order to avoid the confusion which would result if the old symbols were employed with new rules.

3. *Indication of Tonality or Key Relationship.*—That the stave does not clearly and unmistakeably indicate the tonality (or position in the key) of each note, has often been urged as an objection; and probably if it were not for the considerations involved by our test-rule, the staff notation, as a notation for the sight-singer, must very soon remodel itself or relinquish its position. There are very few teachers of sight-singing now-a-days who do not recognise the educational value of tonality. No doubt the player can and does read fluently without cognisance of it, for the production of the correct sound is a mere matter of manipulation—touch the right digital and the right sound comes. But with the singer, the case is different, his mental sense of tune and memory of interval being the only guides in his case. It therefore follows that the training of a sight-singer in the one department of *tune* involves two distinct operations—one giving a practical knowledge of tonality and interval; the other conferring the ability to tell at a glance whether a given note is the first, second, third, or any other degree of the key. Most preceptors, therefore, prefer to teach

these two processes in detail, a practice warranted by the routine of other departments of the teaching art, whether applied to music or anything else. Accordingly, we find that almost every sight-singing method published during the last thirty or forty years provides some contrivance to aid the pupil in reading the key-relationship of the notes while his ear is being trained to the tonality of the sounds represented. These methods have been so numerous that the bare description of them would fill a considerable space. Many of them are extinct, however, and it will suffice to state that previous to the appearance of "Tonic Sol-fa," the usual expedients adopted were that of printing the sol-fa syllables underneath the staff (adopted by moveable do methods and by the Lancashire system), together with that of appending in a similar way the numerals 1 to 7 (used by Waite and others). To these may be added two decided departures from the staff notation: the first of these devices expressed the key-relationship of the notes by varying the shape of the head of the note (square, round, oval, diamond, etc.); the second contrivance was Lunn's "sequential system," which employed a staff specially devised so that the position of the note indicated its key-relationship, instead of its absolute pitch as in the ordinary staff. Soon after the advent of "Tonic Sol-fa" there appeared "Tonic Music"—a movable do method which used the staff printed in the ordinary way, but employed a dotted line or lines to indicate the key-note. This was quickly succeeded by "Letter-note," a moveable do method which employs the ordinary notation, but inserts the sol-fa initials in the staff, and just over or under the head of the note. A year or two later brought a "Combined Notation," and a year or two more a "Union Notation," both of which are variations of the "Letter-note," differing chiefly in the position which the letter holds to the note. Next came Mr. Hullah's sol-fa on the fixed do principle, with inflected syllables, altering the vowel of each sol-fa syllable in accordance with its position in the key. Later still the Cheve notation was imported from France, discarding the staff, and employing the numerals 1 to 7 in a manner similar to the mode in which Tonic Sol-fa uses the sol-fa initials.

These facts abundantly prove the usefulness, and indeed the necessity, of some educational help during the elementary stages, a help not merely to the pupil, but also to the teacher, to whom it provides a ready check upon the performance of the pupil. To superficial observers these facts also seem to indicate a growing conviction that the staff notation is effete and useless, and its days numbered.

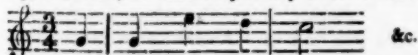
This, however, is not necessarily the case, for, as we have seen, educational works may use any or every expedient which may help their pupils, and yet may leave the staff notation intact for the use of the skilled performer. Whether it be the "fingering" for the use of the pianoforte pupil, the sol-fa initial or the numeral appended to the note for the sight-singing pupil, or any other device of like nature, these are simply the marks of the coloured pencil transferred to print, and multiplied for the sake of class-teaching; they serve a temporary purpose, and are no more necessary to musical notation than the double spelling of the pronouncing dictionary is to general literature. Further, if we test the expediency of the application of such devices to musical notation in general, our rule leads us to infer that they are not required here: notation is for the taught, educational contrivances for the untaught; and the requirements of the latter should not be allowed to override those of the former.

There are, however, certain considerations involved which our test-rule does not quite touch—viz., the fact that the requirements of the taught sight-singer differ in some respects from those of the trained player at sight; the other fact—that, as singing is natural but playing artificial, the interests even of the very youngest vocalist have to be kept in view; and the other fact still—that many adults are, mentally, little better than children, never having been accustomed to mental work of any kind, the act of learning to sing at sight is to them a labour. As regards the child, everybody knows that it will sing almost as soon as it speaks. If, therefore, a child can be taught to read infant music as soon as it can learn to read childish literature, the fact will warrant some special adaptation to meet this particular want. Fortunately, the only thing required here is the longer continuance of the educational help, let that be what it may; and as it so happens that music for children must of necessity differ from that of adults, demanding separate publications, our general musical literature need sustain neither injury nor inconvenience from this source. For the untrained adult, a precisely similar arrangement may be adopted.

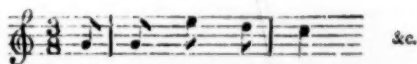
Leaving, therefore, the interests of these two classes of singers to be provided for by special works, we have now to consider how far we are called upon to alter, or depart from, the ordinary notation in teaching the average adult. Now it is probably quite safe to affirm that this desideratum of indicating the key-relationship of the notes has been made far too much of, and the difficulty of dispensing with this aid after a time greatly over-rated.

What are the facts of the case, and who are demanding a general alteration in musical notation which will include the "indication of key-relationship?" The Fixed Do-ists say they require nothing of the kind; the Lancashire Method-ists, if any still exist, in like manner. If anybody is calling for such an alteration, it must be the Movable Do-ists. Not a bit of it, for what say the Tonic Sol-faists? Their report is that, notwithstanding the wide gulf which separates the notations, the transition from the one to the other is "easy." What is the opinion of the other Movable Do-ists? Their opinion, almost universal, is that beyond a certain stage, the educational help is "quite unnecessary." Doubtless these statements would receive ample confirmation if it were possible to obtain from the several publishers statistics of the sale of their various text-books and music; the writer can only speak with certainty regarding the method with the working of which he is most familiar, viz., the Letter-note, and on this head it can be stated that while the elementary educational works sell, value for value, probably twice as much as all the rest, the publications for subsequent practice which are printed in letter-note, have never as yet outsold those in the ordinary notation pure and simple. And when it is borne in mind that pupils who have passed through their elementary training book, have the whole field of musical literature to select from, and do not necessarily adopt the publications offered by the method which taught them, it is evident that to letter-note pupils at all events the act of dispensing with the educational help is a small matter. If, therefore, this much can be said when the staff notation is in the state which so many consider unsatisfactory, it must be evident that if some slight alterations suggested above under the head of "multiplicity of accidentals" were accorded, the difficulty of crossing this "pons asinorum" might be treated as non-existent.

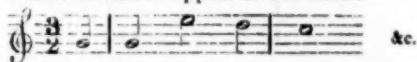
4. *Multiplicity of Time Signatures.*—This is another point, trifling in itself, but still helping to swell the aggregate of improvable matter, which might be looked to very easily, and without detriment to anybody. The facts stand thus:—We have at present three different ways of noting music, each of them right enough in itself, but any two of which are unnecessary. For example, if a composer is writing, say, a ballad, he will very likely note it thus:—



If, on the other hand, he has occasion to use the same phrase for a waltz, he may write it thus:—



But if he is writing for the church, it almost certain to appear in this form:—



Who will set our notation straight and consistent in this matter? Some years ago Mr. Hullah proposed a uniform plan, viz., a crotchet to a beat in simple times, and a dotted crotchet to a beat in compound. The same gentleman also edited some vocal music in accordance with these rules; others have adopted the plan to greater or less extent, and, if composers in general will kindly remember the matter, the slight change suggested may greatly help the educationist.

5. *Multiplicity of Notations.*—This rapidly growing evil is one which, through some unaccountable oversight our reformers invariably omit from their list. This is a pity, for there is every reason to suppose that the evil is entirely of the reformers' own creating. Like certain diseases which physicians tell us are the result of civilization, perhaps it shows that we are over-civilized, musically speaking; but, whether or no, there does seem a possibility that the multitude of cures will become worse than the disease itself. Leaving out of view those sight-singing and sight-playing methods which merely add to the staff the sol-fa syllable, sol-fa initial, or numeral, and which, strictly speaking are "notations," but merely educational appliances used in teaching the staff notation, there are at this moment some half-dozen new notations either proposed or in actual use. What the consequence will be if they go on increasing and multiplying at the present ratio, and if each and all of them come to fruition, no one can foretell. Perhaps the musical world of the future may comprise as many different languages and *notationalities* as the round earth contains tongues and nationalities. Who knows whether one necessary qualification for the office of conductor may not be his skill as a linguist? or whether it may not even be found expedient to instal at each of our universities a professor of notations, whose chief duty will consist in mastering the whole of them? It is quite possible, too, that our literature will include polyglot editions of the classics, and the standard works, and that the stock of every music shop will comprise a collection of languages as varied as that of the British and Foreign Bible Society. This, or something like it, is what we are drifting to; and reformers should clearly understand that every distinct and independent notation added to musical literature is as likely as not to prove

a loss rather than a gain to us, and that there is a very strong possibility of its becoming, sooner or later, a serious encumbrance. Even two notations are an inconvenience if a smaller number will serve; but when it comes to three, four, or more, probably every teacher will consider it to be too much of a good thing.

In conclusion, we have endeavoured to show that many things desired, and rightly to be desired, in educational publications, are not necessarily needed in a musical notation; we have also endeavoured to prove that many suggested improvements (some of them necessitating a new notation) can be amply provided for in educational works; and as the educationist is at full liberty to continue the use of his special help as long as the pupil needs it, it is unnecessary to alter our notation, or substitute a new one, in order to meet this case. It therefore follows that the proper sphere for the exercise of the innovator's talents is the educational field, for there every ingenious scheme and appliance which the inventor can devise will have its use, and probably will receive its fair trial; it follows also that the only admissible improvements in our notation are those which will render it more useful, not to the beginner, but to the skilled performer, whether amateur or professional.

[The *Musical Standard* has done the cause of popular musical education a real service by bringing this question under the notice of its numerous professional readers. There is perhaps a tendency on the part of the profession to look at the matter solely from a professional point of view, just as the educators are prone to over-rate the importance of its educational aspect. But the golden truth lies between the two extremes, and if the initiative of our contemporary stirs up a discussion and a thorough sifting of the whole subject, so much the better. As we hope, therefore, to have occasion to refer to the matter at some future time, we shall at present only suggest a query, and draw attention to two self-evident facts. It is perhaps worth while to inquire whether it is not possible, not only to reduce the number of accidentals, but also to adopt a better principle of employing them. At present, when a performer is just within reading distance of the notes, although he can recognise the presence of an accidental, closer inspection is needed in order to determine its kind; but if, instead of using two new symbols occupying the usual position as regard the note, we employ a single new symbol, occupying two distinct positions (right and left of the note, above and under, or otherwise), a performer who was sufficiently close to his music book to make out the notes, could at the same distance tell (by its position) whether the accidental was a sharp or a flat. The two facts to which we wish to direct attention are these—1st, all improvements in notation must originate with the composers, for they, and only they, have the power to carry them out, the educators being compelled to teach, and the executants to perform, as the composers write: 2nd, a reform suggested is only a suggestion, and in order to do us any good it must be carried out and persevered with until the innovation has become familiar; many useful suggestions have never come to anything simply because nobody had the courage to differ from his neighbour, but if a musician, or several musicians, possessing such a status as would give their opinions due weight, will

first decide carefully what improvements are advisable, and then note all their future compositions accordingly, they will soon have imitators enough.]

MONTHLY NOTES.

LETTER-NOTE is thus spoken of by the *South London Press*:—"We have not the least doubt that pupils would make a more rapid advance in sight-singing by this method than by the use of the old notation alone.

Mr. J. Adley is teaching letter-note singing classes with much success in the southern districts of the metropolis.

Mr. Moody, the revival preacher, has just laid the foundation of a school-house which he is establishing at Northfield, Massachusetts. Among the articles he placed under the stone was Mr. Sankey's voice in "Hold the Fort" phonographically preserved on a sheet of tin-foil.

Last year an organization was formed, with the Prince of Wales at its head, for the establishment of a representative musical institution, "embracing in one body the most eminent practical musicians and the most influential patrons of music." It is now officially announced that the executive committee presided over by Prince Christian, has been engaged during the year in negotiating a union between the Royal Academy of Music and the National Training School for Music, the terms being a charter of amalgamation conditional upon an annual income of at least £3,000, with other advantages, being secured through the agency of the executive committee, for the purpose of carrying into effect the objects of the new institution. The Training School, through the Duke of Edinburgh, has accepted these terms: but, owing to the illness of Lord Dudley, President of the Royal Academy, the directors of that body have not yet had an opportunity of coming to a decision on the subject, and a reply from them is not expected before the end of the year.

Two prizes for pianoforte and string trios are offered by the authorities of Trinity College, Weymouth Street, London. The particulars can be obtained at the College.

The chief musical event occurring since our September number went to press is the triennial festival at Birmingham, held on August 26th, 27th, 28th, and 29th. The larger pieces performed were Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, and *Hymn of Praise*, Rossini's *Moses in Egypt*, Handel's *Messiah* and *Israel* and Cherubini's *Requiem Mass*, together with two cantatas by foreign composers—viz., Bruch's *Lay of the*

Bell, set to Schiller's poem, and Saint-saen's *The Lyre and the Harp*, to words of Victor Hugo. In addition to these works, there were selections of vocal and instrumental music which included an original overture by Dr. Swinnerton Heap, much commended. Although the financial results of the festival have been less satisfactory than the average, and notwithstanding some disappointment caused by the absence of the usual brand new composition of the oratorio order by an English composer, the festival was eminently successful in other respects. All the critics agree that the performance was exceptionally good, the praise bestowed upon the chorus being unanimous and unstinted. The praise was evidently well-earned, for while the weightier matters of the oratorio and cantata received a rendering thoroughly worthy of them, the smaller compositions down to the part-songs were not neglected: remarking upon the latter the *Saturday Musical Review* says:—

"A very enjoyable feature in the evening's entertainment was the rendering of Mr. A. R. Gaul's part song "The Silent Land. Mr. Stockley, the worthy and accomplished conductor of the Festival Choral Society, by whom the preparation of the choir was undertaken, came forward to conduct it, and the way in which he was received, both by the choir and the audience, must be very grateful to him. The rendering was as near perfection as may be expected in this sultry sphere. It was one of the finest efforts of unaccompanied choral singing we have ever heard."

We watch with great interest the advances made by the telephone, which is certain sooner or later to come into general use as a transmitter of musical performances. Experiments already made show that this is practicable, and it is only a question of time for the idea to be realized in daily life. The instrument seems at last to be likely to be brought into practical use in London. The proprietors of both the Bell and Edison telephones are starting "exchanges," systems by which a number of stations are all connected to a central station, and through it to one another. Numbers of their exchanges have been for some time working successfully in America, and in Glasgow the same principles have been applied, but with telegraph instruments instead of telephones. The central office of the Bell Telephone Company is in Coleman-street, and they also have a number of firms in similar communication with them. In Manchester also shops are being taken to establish a telephone exchange, Bell's telephones being employed

in this case. It is obvious that there may be many greater facilities for the system in a provincial town than in London, though there can be no reason why even here the experiment should not succeed. It may perhaps eventually prove a disadvantage to have competing systems using different instruments, as it can never be possible under any circumstances to connect the two central stations, and thereby enable all subscribers to one exchange to communicate with all those of the other; but at the commencement there are doubtless advantages to the public in competition.—*Musical Standard*.

At the Hereford Musical Festival, held last month, Sullivan's *Light of the World* was performed.

Oswestry, hitherto unknown in connection with musicals festivals, celebrated last month the first performance of this kind.

The Bristol Musical Festival is announced to come off in October, and is expected to rank as high, or even higher, than the last, which, our readers will recollect, was of remarkable excellence.

EASY ANTHEMS FOR AMATEUR CHOIRS, published in "Choral Harmony," in penny numbers—

- | | | |
|-----|---|----------------|
| 14 | Make a joyful noise | |
| 15 | Sing unto God | |
| 20 | Blessed is he that considereth the poor | |
| 24 | Now to him who can uphold us | |
| 31 | The earth is the Lord's | |
| 71 | Hallelujah! the Lord reigneth | |
| 75 | Blessed be the Lord | |
| 75 | Great and marvellous | |
| 130 | God be merciful unto us and bless us | |
| 131 | Deus Misereatur | |
| 138 | Give ear to my words | |
| 24 | Come unto me all ye that labour | American. |
| 39 | Walk about Zion | Bradbury. |
| 39 | He shall come down like rain | Portogallo. |
| 43 | Blessed are those servants | J. J. S. Bird. |
| 43 | Enter not into judgment | Do. |
| 60 | But in the last days | Mason. |
| 64 | Great is the Lord | American. |
| 64 | Arise, O Lord, into thy rest | Do. |
| 69 | Awake, awake, put on thy strength | Burgiss. |
| 77 | Grant, we beseech thee, merciful Lord | Calcott. |
| 84 | I will arise and go to my father | Cecil. |
| 84 | Blessed are the people | American. |
| 86 | I was glad when they said unto me | Calcott. |
| 129 | Blessed are the poor in spirit | Naumann. |
| 136 | O-Lord, we praise thee | Mozart. |
| 136 | The Lord's prayer | Denman. |
| 140 | O-praise the Lord | Weldon. |
| 140 | I will love thee, O-Lord | Hummel. |

R. A. Smith.

London: F. Pitman, 20, Paternoster Row.
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METZLER & CO'S PENNY PART-SONGS.

Arranged for four voices. Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass, by

EDWARD F. RIMBAULT.

Ring the bell, watchman
Rock me to sleep, mother
Lulu is our darling pride
The hazel dell
Watching for Pa
Some folks
Hark! the herald angels sing, and Christians awake
Hail Columbia
Star-spangled banner
The Marseillaise
The watch on the Rhine
The German Fatherland
The German Rhine
Just before the battle
Just after the battle
Rule, Britannia
The tight little Island
You gentlemen of England
The red, white, and blue
Hearts of oak
British Grenadiers
The Bay of Biscay
Annie Laurie
God save the Queen
The Campbells are comin'
Scots wae hae wi' Wallace bled
Within a mile of Edinboro' town
Eulalie
Lillie Dale
Annie of the vale
Under the willow she's sleeping
Toll the bell
When Johnny comes marching home
Jessie, the flower of Dunblane
Comin' through the rye

Home, sweet home
Kelvin Grove
The keel row
Bonnie Dunder
The lass o' Gowrie
Calder herrin'
March of the men of Harlech
Dulce Domum
Has sorrow thy young days shaded?
The young May moon
Rich and rare were the gems she wore
Last rose of summer
Farewell! but whenever you welcome the hour
Love's young dream
Believe me, if all those endearing young charms
The harp that once through Tara's halls
The minstrel boy
Chorus of musketeers
The old, old song
Bells of Aberdovey
See our oars with feathered spray
Oh lady fair
The wreath
Cherry ripe
Hail! smiling morn
Russian National Anthem
Russian Bridal Song
Love will find out the way
To all you ladies
My love is but a lassie yet
The blue bells of Scotland
Drink to me only
Dame Durden
Here's to the maiden

Arranged by

G. A. MACFARREN.

A place in thy memory
Row gently here, my gondolier
Drive the cold winter away
The meeting of the waters

Auld lang syne
Ye banks and braes
Silent, O Moyle

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2. That the STAFF-NOTATION, taking it all round, is the BEST yet invented, affording peculiar advantages to the PLAYER, and also to the SIGHT-SINGER who understands his work.

3. That the best systems of sight-singing are those founded upon the TONIC DO principle, because the KEY is a mere accident, but the SCALE is the TUNE, and it is by the relation which the sounds bear to the Tonic and to each other (not by their pitch upon the Stave) that the Vocalist sings.

4. That the easiest possible mode of teaching on this principle is that termed LETTER-NOTE, which appends the Sol-fa initials to the ordinary notes, and either withdraws the letters gradually, or otherwise trains the pupil to dispense with their aid.

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6. That Letter-note, while it is legible by every Player, gives the Singer all the AID derivable from a specially contrived notation.

7. That the assistance of Letter-note in learning to sing is as LEGITIMATE and ADVANTAGEOUS as the "fingering" printed for the use of the Pupil-pianist.

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The frets are labelled with the sol-fa syllables or their initials, or with the numerals 1 to 7: thus DO, or 1, corresponds to the key-note, —RE, or 2, to the second degree of the scale, —MI, or 3, to the third degree, etc., and this rule applies quite irrespective of the pitch at which the string may be for the time being, for the string performs alike in all keys, and the sounds always remain *relatively* the same. All keys are, therefore, "natural" upon the Intonator, and the operations of pitching the key, or transposing to another key, consist simply in tightening or slackening the string (by means of the peg) to the required pitch. The pitch of the string can be altered as much as an octave, giving the power of playing in all keys; and on these improved Intonators, by a simple contrivance, provision is made for playing in two or more natural keys *without altering the pitch of the string*. The chromatic sharps or flats, or both, are given on all the Intonators.

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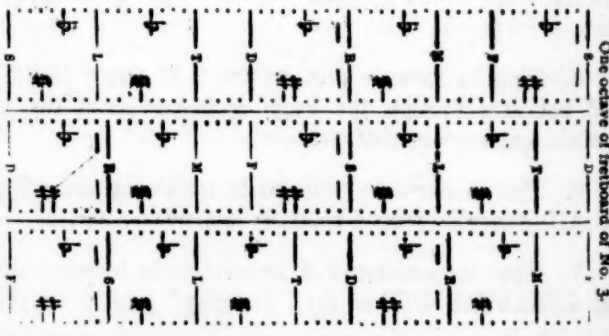
No. 1 provides for two natural keys without altering the string—viz., the major and minor keys of the same tonic: for example, if the string is pitched at C, the player has the keys of C major and C minor before him in their natural form.

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